THE HISTORY OF Mother *Shipton.*

Printed and Sold in Aldermary Church-Yard, London.

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CHAP. I.
Of her BIRTH.

MOther SHIPTON, as all hiſtories agree, was born in Yorkſhire; the place is much diſputed, but the received opinion is Knareſho ough, near the Dropping Well. Concerning her parentage there are likewiſe various reports; ſome ſay her father was a Necromancer, and thereby it became entailed on his inheritance. But the common ſtory, which therefore I ſhall follow is, that her mother was the daughter of poor parents, who died when ſhe was ſcarce fifteen years of age.

Agatha, for that was her name, being of a melancholy temper, and reduced to extreme poverty, was one day ſitting in a melancholy poſture by the ſide of a river; when ſhe was accoſted by the Devil, in the ſhape of a handſome young man, in this manner, How now, my pretty maid, why are you ſo ſad? Does any thing trouble you? Diſcover but your malady, and I,ll ſoon eaſe your troubles.

Agatha not thinking of the devil, took him for ſome compaſſionate mortal, and ſo let him underſtand, That her great wants were the occaſion of her troubles. Piſh, ſaid the infernal courtier, that is a trifle; for if you like me I'l marry you, and take care of you. This is too good to be true, ſaid Agatha.——Meet me at this place to morrow morning, ſaid he, and I'll be as good as my word.——To this Agatha conſented, and came to the ſame place at the time appointed, and the Devil was as punctual as ſhe was, and it ſeems he came provided to carry away his bride, having a horſe with a pillion, ſo without many words, when both ſides were agreed, ſhe got up behind him, and

His courſer being of the infernal kind needed neither whip nor ſpur, but ſwift as the wind immediately brought them to their journeys end, where alighting, ſhe was conducted into a ſtately manſion, and rich garments being brought her, ſhe was bid to attire herſelf in them, which ſhe did, and then was led into a ſtately hall, where ſhe found a large table furniſhed with all manner of dainties, herſelf being placed at the upper end, next to her infernal husband; then the other gueſts placed themſelves as they pleaſed.

Having dined they went to dancing, in the midſt of which Argalus's luſtful Devil took her into a private room, and there enticing her to luſt, ſhe conſented, and they went to-bed without any more ceremony. His embraces as ſhe told the midwife, were as cold as ice, without any genial warmth.

After this action of theirs was over, he told her what he was, and that ſhe ſhould have power to command the winds, raiſe tempeſts, or do whatever ſhe pleaſed; ſo ſhe believing him, he taught her a parcel of intelligible gibberiſh.

His

His infernal cerimonies being over, it thundered after a prodigious manner, and the poor wretch was ſtripped of all her gaudy attire, and found herſelf in the middle of a diſmal wood, wherein ſhe ſaw a chariot drawn by two flaming dragons, coming towards her, and was, by ſome invible hand put into it, and in an inſtant carried through the air to her own cottage.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Shipton's Mother proves with-child; of her ſevere Treatment to a Juſtice; and the ſtrange Circumſtances that attended her Birth.

THE neighbours ſeeing Agatha live ſo handſome, without any employ, were ſurprized; and the more ſo when they pereeived ſhe was with-child, which could not be concealed. So ſhe was had before a Juſtice of the Peace, who chid her for her incontinency, but was ſoon ſilenced, for his wife and family being preſent, Agatha ſaid to him, Mr. Juſtice though you talk ſo much, your Worſhip is not ſo free, for there ſtands two of your ſervant wenches both with-child by you, pointing to them with her finger; upon which they were all ſo black that his wife ſaw what Agatha ſaid was true, and ſo fell on the harlots like fury, for nothing could aſſuage her. So Agatha was diſmiſſed, and was ſoon afterwards delivered, in the month of July, in the fourth year of the reign of King Henry VII. and in

the year of Chriſt 1488. Her travel was grievous, and the birth of the child attended with thunder and lightening. This was the child who was afterwards called Mother Shipton.—The ſtrange phyſiognomy of the infant frighted the goſſips; its body was long, and very big boned, great goggling ſharp, and fiery eyes, and unproportionable noſe, full of crooks, turnings, and red pimples, which gave ſuch light that needed not a candle to dreſs her by; as it was likewiſe obſerved that as ſoon as ſhe was born ſhe fell a grinning and laughing, after a jeering manner; and immediately the tempeſt ceaſed.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

By what other Name Mother Shipton was Chriſtened; and of her Mother's going into a Monaſtry.

THE child being thus born, was ordered by the Abbot of Beverley to be chriſtened, which was performed by the name of Urſula Sontibles, ſo was her mother named, and Shipton was her huſband's name.—But to proceed, When ſhe was about two years old, her mother became ſenſible of her evil, in holding correſpondence with a wicked ſpirit; ſo applying to ſeveral religious men of great note, by whoſe grave advice ſhe became truly penitent, and put herſelf in a neighbouring monaſtry, having firſt put her child to nurſe to a friend with a piece of money, and then ſpent the remainder of her days in the famous convent of the order of St. Bridget, near Nottingham, in prayers and tears, and other acts of penance, for the wickedneſs of her youth, but wonderful it was to relate the accidents

what befel the old nurſe ſhe was put to, for the fiend her father often viſited her; particularly one day ſhe found he, doors open; ſo fearing that ſhe was robbed, ſhe asked three or four neighbours wives to go into the entry. They heard a noiſe as if an hundred cats had been in concert, at which they were ſo diſmayed that they all endeavoured who ſhould firſt get out of doors; but in vain, for every one had a yoke on But ſoon after the yoke fell off and a coal-ſtaff laid on two mens ſhoulders on which an old woman preſented herſelf ſtark naked, hanging ſometimes by the middle; while the women having their cloaths over their heads, expoſed their ſhame to publick view, and ſo continued, till a friar accidentally came to the houſe, and then they were ſuddenly releaſed; but ſtill the child could not be found, till one of the company looking by chance into the chimney, ſaw it ſtark naked, ſitting aſtride upon the iron to which the pot-hooks were faſtened, from whence they took it down, not in the leaſt hurt, and ſo far from being frighted, that it ſeemed by its monſterous ſmile to be pleaſed at the pleaſant exploits.

CHAP. VI.

Several other merry pranks played by Mother Shipton, in Revenge to ſuch as abuſed her.

AS our Urſula grew up ſhe was often affronted, by reaſon of her deformity, but ſhe never failed to take revenge on thoſe that did it. As one day the pariſh being met, one abuſed her, by calling her Devil's Baſtard, Hag's Face, and the like; whereupon ſhe grumbled and went away; but when they ſet down to dinner one of them in an inſtant had his ruff pulled off, and the ſeat of an houſe-of-office clapt in its place. He that ſat next him burſt into a laughter; upon this his hat was conveyed away, and a cloſe-ſtool pan put in its room; beſides this, a modeſt young gentlewoman ſitting at the table, looking on the two, endeavoured to refrain from laughing, but ſhe could not, and continued breaking wind backwards for a quarter of an hour like ſo many broadſides, at which the company laugh-

ing ſo heartily, that the maſter of the houſe was alarmed therewith; and being deſirous to ſhare with his gueſts in their mirth, he came running up ſtairs; but offering to enter the door, he could not, and no wonder, ſince the oldeſt man alive never ſaw a larger pair of horns than he had on his head. But while they was gazing on each other, as more than half diſtracted, they were all reduced to the ſame condition they were in at firſt. —— After which followed a vaſt noiſe, as if above an hundred perſons were laughing together, but nothing ſeen.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Urſula marries a young Man named Toby Shipton; and of her puniſhing a Thief.

OUR Urſula was now twenty-four years old, and though not the pretticſt maid in town, yet ſhe longed for a husband as much as the beſt of them, and at laſt obtained her deſires; for whether ſhe uſed any love powder, or charms, to enamour him; or whether the hopes of getting ſome money, which ſhe was reported to have, though no body could gueſs how ſhe could come by it, cauſed him to court her. The ſweetheart's name was Toby Shipton, by trade a carpenter, to whom ſhe was ſhortly married, and very comfortably they lived together, but never had any children.

It happened about a month after her marriage, one of her neighbours leaving her door careleſsly open, loſt a new ſmock and a fine petticoat; which was ſtolen as ſhe was telling a goſſips tale of an hour long. This misfortune ſhe made known

to Mother Shipton, who did not as our conjurors make a long diſcovery of ſhe knew not what, but told her ſuch a woman by name had ſtolen the things, and ſhe'd make her return them the next market day before all the people. This ſhe did, for the woman could not avoid putting the ſmock on over her cloaths, and the very petticoat in her hand, and marched through the croud to the market croſs, where the other woman was, by Mother Shipton's directions, ſtanding to receive them, dancing all the way, and ſinging theſe words:

I ſtole my neighbour's ſmock and coat,
I am a thief, and here I ſhow't.

CHAP. IV.

Her Prophecy againſt Cardinal Wolſey.

BY theſe and ſuch like exploits Mother Shipton had got a name far and near for a cunning woman, or a woman of foreſight, ſo that her words was counted as an Oracle; nor did ſhe only treat with the mean private perſons, but was conſulted by the quality, amongſt whom when cardinal Wolſey was ſaid to be coming to York, ſhe publickly ſaid, That he would never come thither. The Cardinal being told this, was offended and ordered three Lords to go to her, who all came in diſguiſe to Ring-Houſe near York, where they took one Mr. Beaſley for their guide. So coming to Shipton's houſe, ſhe cried Come in Mr. Beaſley, and thoſe noble Lords with you; which much ſurpriſed them; and as they came in, ſhe called each of them by their names, and gave them cakes and ale; whereupon one of the Lords ſaid, If you knew our errand, you'd not make us ſo welcome; you ſaid

the Cardinal ſhould ever ſee York.—No, ſaid ſhe, I ſaid he might ſee it, but ſhould never come at it.—Well, ſaid the Lords, when he comes thou wilt be burnt. She

then took a linen handkerchief, and ſaid, If that burns then may I burn, and put it into the fire, but it would not burn; ſo after it lay in the flames a quarter of an hour, ſhe took it out again not ſo much as ſinged. Hereupon one of the Lords asked her what ſhe thought of him?—My Lord, ſaid ſhe, the time will come when you ſhall be as low as I am; which proved true, for ſoon after he was beheaded.

Nor was her ſpeech about the Cardinal leſs true, for coming to Kaywood, he went to the top of a tower, and asked

where York was? Which being ſhewn him, he enquired how far it was thither? for, quoth he, there was a Witch ſaid I ſhould never get there. Then he vowed to burn her as ſoon as he came to the place, which was but eight miles diſtant; but behold he was immediately ſent for by the King, and on his return died of a violent looſeneſs at Leiceſter.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Some other Prophecies of Mother Shipton relating to theſe Times.

AT divers other times, when perſons of quality came to viſit her, ſhe delivered theſe prophecies:

Firſt Prophecy.

Before Ooſe bridge and Trinity church meet, they ſhall build it by day, and it ſhall fall by night; until they get the uppermoſt ſtone of Trinity church to be the loweſt ſtone of Ooſe Bridge.

Explanation.

This came to paſs, for Trinity ſteeple in York was blown down by a tempeſt; and Ooſe-bridge broke down by a rapid flood, and what they repaired by day fell down by night, until at laſt they laid the higheſt ſtone of the ſteeple as a foundation of the Bridge.

Second Prophecy.

A time ſhall come when a ſhip will come ſailing up the Thames till it is oppoſite London, and the maſter of the ſhip

asks the Captain why he weeps, ſince he has made ſo good a voyage; and he ſhall ſay, Ah! what a grand city was this? none in all the world comparable to it, and now there is ſcarce a houſe left.

Explanation.

Theſe words were verified after the dreadful Fire of London in 1666, not one houſe being left on the Thames ſide from the Tower to the Temple.

CHAP. VIII.

Her Prophecies to the Abbot of Beverley.

THE Abbot of Beverley giving her a viſit, told her, As he had found many of her predictions true, ſo he was perſwaded ſhe was not ignorant of what was to enſue; and ſo requeſted her to impart ſome of her knowledge to him, for which favour he ſhould neither want a tongue or a heart to make a return.

Mr. Abbot ſaid ſhe, do leave off complimenting, I am an old woman, who will neither flatter or be flattered by any, yet ſhall anſwer your deſire as ſoon a

may be, and ſo in myſtical verſes diſcovered to him the vaſt accidents which have happened from that time to this, as in the following explanations will ſoon appear.

When the Cow does ride the Bull,
Then Prieſt beware thy Skull.

By the Cow was meant Henry VIII. who gave the Cow in his Arms as Earl of Richmond; and the Bull betokens Anne Bullen, not only as the firſt ſyllable of her name, but becauſe her father gave a Bull's Head in the Creſt. And immediately after the diſſolution of monaſtries and Romiſh Prieſts.

For a ſweet pious Prince make room'
And in each Kirk prepare a broom.

This means King Edward the VIth, when the Proteſtant religion was eſtabliſhed, and the Popiſh religion aboliſhed; the old Popiſh ſuperſtition ſwept out of the Kirk: an old word uſed in Scotland for the church.

Theſe

Theſe lines decipher Queen Mary; ſhe being called Alecto, the name of the Goddeſs of the Furies. for her cruelty to the Proteſtants, of whom great numbers died in Smithfield.

A Maiden Queen full many year,
Shall England's warlike ſcepter bear.

Spoken of Queen Elizabeth, who was beloved by her ſubjects, and dreaded by her enemies above forty years.

The weſtern Monarchs wooden horſes,
Shall be deſtroyed by Drake's forces.

The King of Spain's mighty Armada in 1488, deſtroyed by the Engliſh fleet.

The Northern Lion o'er the Tweed,
The Maiden Queen ſhall next ſucceed,
And join in one two mighty ſtates,
Then ſhall Janus ſhut her gates.

This relates to King James, who having been many years king of Scotland, the crown of England by Queen Elizabeth's Death fell to him, whereupon he came over the Tweed to take up his reſidence here, and ſo joined the two old kingdoms under one government. — As for Janus

ſhutting up his gates; you muſt know Jaſon was one of the Heathen Gods, whoſe gates was never ſhut but in time of peace; alluding unto which our Propheteſs declares the peaceful and quiet reign of King James.

Forth from the North miſchief blew,
And Engliſh Hob ſhall add thereto:
Mars ſhall rage as he was wood,
And earth ſhall darken'd be with blood.

This relates to our Civil Wars.

But what next?—O cruel fate,
A King made Martyr at his gate.

This means the wicked and execrable murder of King Charles I.

The juſt King dead, the Wolf ſhall then
With blood uſurp the Lion's den;
Confuſion ſhall a while bear ſway,
But death ſhall fetch him hence away.
Then fate to England ſhall reſtore
A King to reign as heretofore;
Who Mercy and Judgment likewiſe,
Shall in his empire exerciſe.

Thoſe prophecies have been fulfilled by Cromwell's uſurpation, the commiting

of ſafety's confuſion; and the miraculous reſtoration of Charles II.

Triumphant Death rides London thro',
And men on top of houſes go.

The firſt line points out the great ſickneſs in London in 1665; the ſecond the dreadful fire in the following year.

The North ſhall rue it wonderous ſore,
But the South rue it evermore.

You ſhall have a year of hunger, and you ſhall not know of the war over night, yet it ſhall be in the morning, and when it happens it ſhall laſt three years.

Then may a man make a houſe of a bower, land, or tower, for twenty-one years; but afterwards it ſhall be a white harveſt of corn got in by a woman; then ſhall it be that one woman ſhall ſay unto another, Mother! Mother! I have ſeen a man to-day. — For one man there ſhall be a thouſand women.

Unhappy he that lives to ſee theſe days,
But happy are the dead, old Shipton ſays,
Let this ſuffice, the night comes on,
You muſt depart and I begone;

Apollo does forbid my rhymes,
For to unveil ſucceeding times.

Having thus ſaid, Mother Shipton aroſe, and the Abbot departed.

CHAP. IX.

Of Mother Shipton's Death and Burial; alſo her Epitaph.

THis famous propheteſs continued for ſeveral years eſteemed as the Oracle of the times. At laſt being ſeventy years of age, ſhe found the time in the black book of Deſtiny, wherein ſhe muſt bid adieu to the world, which he foretold to a day; and at the hour predicted having taken ſolemn leave of her friends, ſhe laid herſelf down and died. — On her tomb this epitaph was wrote.

Her EPITAPH.

Here lies ſhe who never ly'd,
Whoſe skill ſo often has been try'd,
Her prophecies ſhall ſtill ſurvive,
And ever keep her name alive.

An ancient Prophecy of the Lilly King and K. W.

THE Lilly ſhall remain in a merry world, and ſhall be moved againſt the ſeed of the Lion, and he ſhall ſtand on one ſide of her country with a number of ſhips. Then ſhall come the Son of Man, whoſe kingdom is in the Land of the Moon, which is dreaded through all the world; with a number of people ſhall he paſs many waters, and come to the Land of the Lion, looking out for help of the Beaſt of his country; and an Eagle ſhall come out of the Eaſt, ſpread with the beams of the Son of Man, and ſhall deſtroy the caſtle of the Thames, and there ſhall be battles among many kingdoms. That year ſhall be the bloody and white Field, and Lilly K. J. ſhall loſe his crown wherewith ſhall be crowned the Son of Man K. W. And in the fourth year ſhall be many battles for the faith, and the Son of Man with the Eagle ſhall be preferred, and there ſhall be peace all over the world, and there ſhall be plenty of fruits; and then ſhall he go unto the Land of the Croſs.

FINIS.